



Ambassador Jeffrey L. Bleich – AIAA Plaque Unveiling

**Remarks of Ambassador Bleich
at the AIAA plaque unveiling
Canberra Deep Space Communication Complex**

(As prepared for delivery – May 25, 2010)

This plaque is a testament to U.S.-Australian cooperation. As strong in deep space as here on Earth. The U.S. and Australia have been strategic partners in space exploration for more than 50 years. The historic role the stations, and the people, we are commemorating today in the exploration of outer space cannot be overstated.

At the same time that we honor the past 50 years, we celebrate the next 50. Our governments recently exchanged diplomatic notes to continue our efforts in the exploration of deep space. The agreement allows us to install two new antennas at Tidbinbilla that will control and track not only current probes and vehicles in outer space, but spacecraft that have not even been designed yet.

As the President has said, "Space exploration is not a luxury, it's not an afterthought in America's quest for a brighter future – it is an essential part of that quest."

President Obama has outlined a new direction for space exploration that will build on NASA's long and successful history of international cooperation with a renewed emphasis on the importance of international partnerships in NASA's future human space exploration activities. We will continue to work closely with our existing partners and even invite new non-traditional partners to join us in the implementation of our exploration plans.

Before we reach the surface of Mars with humans, the President has set as a goal that we will explore an asteroid by 2025. We can't do this without new technology.

The President has outlined an ambitious effort to foster the development of ground breaking technologies to develop the propulsion systems to get us there, large habitats that also shield and protect our crew, and the means to sustain these explorers for longer and longer periods of time. And that's just for starters.

Tidbinbilla will be an integral part of those missions. I am proud today to join AIAA, CSIRO and all of you in remembering the work that has been done at all the Australian stations, to make that next step possible.